

A STRANGE IMBROGLIO.

Premier Estrup's Contempt for the Will of the Danish People.

The Close of a Long and Most Curious Political Struggle—Characteristics of the Bismarck of Denmark.

The late resignation of Jacob Estrup, prime minister of Denmark, brings to a close one of the longest and most curious political struggles of the present century, says the San Francisco Call. To understand it it is necessary to go back nearly thirty years. In 1863 the present constitution of Denmark was approved by the monarch. Under it the executive power was lodged in the hands of the king and the legislative power in those of the diet, consisting of the landsting and the folkething. Under this constitution, in 1875, Jacob Estrup became prime minister. Five years afterward the king and his ministry resolved to undertake a system of fortifications which were to cost a large sum of money and to involve heavy taxation. The folkething—which corresponds to our house of representatives—refused to assent to the project, and took that opportunity of insisting on its right to initiate financial measures and to require the resignation of a ministry which could not command its support. Both demands were negatived by the king. He claimed the right of choosing his ministers without regard to the wishes of the folkething, and he insisted on framing a budget to suit himself. Estrup haughtily refused to resign office.

The dispute ended in a compromise by which the king yielded everything except the right to choose his ministry. But in 1881 the quarrel broke out afresh with increased virulence. Four times the monarch dissolved the folkething, but at each election the liberals gained strength. In 1883 a vote of want of confidence in Estrup was passed by a large majority, and the supplies were reduced to a minimum before they were voted. Estrup went on administering the government although there was no such body as the folkething in existence. The king utterly repudiated the idea that the people could dictate his choice of a ministry, and in retaliation the popular assembly threw out every measure which Estrup proposed.

The agitation gained strength until, in 1885, the folkething absolutely refused to vote the budget, and left the obnoxious Estrup ministry without means to carry on the government. The king retorted by dissolving the diet. Thus freed from popular interference he and his ministers promulgated a royal law embodying a list of appropriations and empowering the ministry to collect taxes and make all necessary expenditures for the conduct of government. In other words the constitution was suspended. This abnormal condition of affairs has gone on ever since. The king and his ministers frame a provisional budget, which is

approved by the landsting, or house of lords, and is rejected by the folkething. It is nevertheless put into force, the taxes are collected and the government is carried on. The popular house protests, but it has never seen its way to enforce its protests by an appeal to arms. Whenever a compromise has been proposed the king has insisted that it should embrace a bill of indemnity for the unconstitutional acts of the past eight years, and the leaders of the popular party have always refused to surrender their right of impeaching the usurping ministers.

The protracted existence of this curious anomaly has been due to various causes. In the first place there is no one in Denmark who can compare in energy and persistency with Jacob Estrup. He is like a rock against which popular clamor dashes itself with idle spray. He is not to be moved by threats or argument. What he has resolved upon has got to be. And he is backed up by a house of lords—the landsting—which merely exists to register his desires. King Christian is a well-meaning, honest man of the Bourbon type. He believes he knows what is wisest for Denmark far better than the people do. In political affairs he is like Charles II. of England and Charles X. of France rolled into one. Personally he is a delightful man, genial, kindly, familiar with letters and art, and admired by all who come into contact with him. He is the father of a large family; one of his sons is king of Greece, one of his daughters is empress of Russia, and another princess of Wales. It may safely be assumed that the leaders of the folkething were notified when they fell out with his majesty that before proceeding to extremities they had better consider whether England and Russia might not feel impelled by family ties to take a hand in the controversy. Now at last Estrup has resigned and a new minister will probably be disposed to seek his own comfort by composing his differences with the people of Denmark.

Duck Farming.

It is worthy of note that the Chinese very, very long ago hatched out their ducks by artificial heat, and the incubators that seem so wonderful to us at the poultry shows and country fairs were an old story in the east long before our great-grandfathers were born. It is likely, says Harper's Weekly, that we got the domesticated duck from China, so long ago that we know not when, and the writers on natural history content themselves with telling us that it is derived from the mallard, mixed in some cases with the musk duck and the gadwall, and perhaps the black duck. The domestication of the duck has had an effect the opposite of that usually produced by civilization on man, for the mallard is strictly monogamous. Waterton the naturalist assures us, indeed, that the wild duck is a most faithful husband, and remains paired for life, while the domestic drake is most notoriously polygamous.

WHEN HER COAL GIVES OUT.

Then England Will Be Ready to Undertake This Tremendous Project.

The Popular Science Monthly contains an article describing a proposed isthmus or dam across the northern part of the Irish channel, the main object being to utilize the current through this channel for mechanical purposes. The channel is 300 feet deep on the average, fifteen miles wide and the tidal current from the north is eight miles an hour. As a result fifty cubic miles, or over 200,000,000,000 tons of water, pass the point where it is proposed to build the dam every day. The rate at which the water moves gives each of these tons of water the power of ten-foot tons, and the power developed is therefore between 150,000,000 and 200,000,000 horse power. There are hills near at hand from which the materials for the dam can be taken; and shipping may be provided for by locks, or by enlarging certain canals.

If the plan should be successful it would make England practically independent of her coal supply; but there are obstacles in the way. For instance, says the Brooklyn Citizen, it would be impossible to transmit the electrical power produced without loss, and transferring it for more than 100 miles is at present impracticable. It would nevertheless be possible to use it in the Lancashire cotton mills and perhaps in the smelting works of northern England. Electricity may also be used in cooking, and if the price of coal rose somewhat it could be employed for heating. As an engine requires about one ton of coal a year per horse power to keep it running day and night, it will be seen that England would in this new source of power have a substitute for her entire coal output. The cost of the undertaking is estimated at 2100,000,000; reckoning interest at 5 per cent. this would be about 3 cents a year for every horse power produced, or equal to 3 cents a ton for every ton of coal displaced. But the cost of utilizing the force would be enormous. It is doubtful whether this plan is practicable as yet, but it shows how groundless are the fears of those who think that civilization must cease when the world's coal supply gives out. Here is an opportunity to secure horse power enough to run all the mills and furnaces in Great Britain.

WOMEN AS DOCTORS.

Their Number Increasing in the United States—Well Fitted for the Work.

Nowhere in the world is there a place where the modern woman has had and has such enthusiastic support in all her ventures as here in America, and the modern woman has not been slow in improving the opportunities offered her. It is hard to mention any field into which she has not entered to compete successfully with the sterner sex, and in some professions she has completely dethroned man from his former unquestioned supremacy. There is perhaps no profession to which the emancipation of modern woman is more inclined than the medical. It is a little hard to tell why she should